

High School Graduation Rates in the District of Columbia

	Current Method	Cohort Method
Formula	<div>Total Graduates</div> <div>(Total Graduates in 2009 + 12th grade dropouts in 08-09 + 11th grade dropouts in 07-08 + 10th grade dropouts in 06-07 + 9th grade dropouts in 05-06)</div>	<div>Total Graduates</div> <div>(Total Number of Students who Entered Ninth Grade 4 years Earlier – Students who Transferred Out + Students Who Transferred In)</div>
Example	<p>188 students graduated from a school in 2009. In the same school year, 27 12th grade students dropped out. The previous year, 26 11th grade students dropped out. The year prior to that, 33 10th grade students dropped out, and in 2005-2006, 45 9th grade students dropped out. This school’s graduation rate is $188/(188+27+26+33+45) = 58.93\%$.</p>	<p>400 students began 9th grade at a DCPS school in 2005-2006. 50 students transfer out during the next four years; 32 students transfer in. 188 diplomas were awarded in 2009. This school’s graduation rate is $188/(400-80+32)= 53.4\%$ (Example – data are not real.)</p>

How was the graduation rate calculated in the 2008-2009 school year?

- Determine the total number of students who graduated with a regular diploma in 2008.
- Determine the total number of dropouts over the Class of 2008’s four years in high school.
- Add the number of dropouts across all four years plus the number of graduates. This is the total cohort.
- Divide the total number of graduates by the total cohort number. This is the graduation rate.

Moving towards a new kind of graduation rate – Cohort Method – to be implemented in 2010-2011

- Required by the U.S. Department of Education for all states (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/proposal/uniform-grad-rate.html> or <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi>)
- Determine the total number of students who graduate with a regular diploma.
- Determine the total number of the cohort.
 - Determine the total number of students who entered 9th grade in the 2007-2008 school year.
 - Remove any students who transferred, emigrated, or passed away during any of the cohort’s four years in high school; Add any students who transferred in during any of the cohort’s four years in high school.
 - Divide the total number of graduates by the total cohort number.

Major differences between current and new methods

- The new method follows **individual students** from the beginning of high school to the end.
- The new method focuses on **four-year, on-time graduation**.
 - The current method does not pay attention to whether students are graduating in 4 years, 5 years, or more.
- The new method pays attention to how many students are on a **diploma track**.
 - The current method simply ignores students who are on a certificate or non-diploma track.